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ABSTRACT

A 4-H exchange program in which eight youth from the Dominican Republic came to Indiana and a like number of Purdue University-sponsored 4-H members visited the Dominican Republic is described. The program, sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency, was part of a larger program to strengthen youth leadership resources in both places through a six-week thematic exchange in natural resources and conservation education. The report summarizes the participant recruitment and selection process, host family recruitment and selection, orientation and debriefing activities, thematic activities, follow-up activities, evaluation and debriefing, and program recommendations emerging from this experience. While group activities are emphasized, the report also describes some of the individual participants' activities. The recommendations address problems in the scheduling of host family selection, organization of exchange activities, communication between adult and youth participants, program timing, quality and quantity of cultural orientation, and language proficiency. (MSE)

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A YOUTH EXCHANGE MODEL FOR TEACHING ABOUT NATURAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Presented at the

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by

Michael H. Stitsworth

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Introduction

Four-H, a program of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, is Indiana's largest non-formal educational program with a membership of 160,000 youths distributed among Indiana's 92 counties.

Most 4-H educational experiences center around subject matter "projects" supported by printed and audiovisual materials prepared by the faculty of Purdue University. Of the approximately 70 projects available to 4-H members in Indiana, 9 projects deal specifically with the area of natural resources and conservation (e.g. soil and water, geology, weather, forestry, wildlife, entomology, etc.).

Traditionally, 4-Hers enrolled in natural resources-related projects complete activities outlined in written project manuals which culminate in exhibits at the county and/or state fair. The youth exchange described herein sought to provide an alternative to the traditional project approach by involving advanced 4-Hers in an international cultural experience featuring opportunities whereby their natural resources and conservation skills could be broadened and enhanced.

The Model

The 4-H Department was awarded a $15,000 grant from the United States Information Agency (USIA) for a thematic youth exchange between Indiana 4-H and the Dominican Republic as part of Phase II of the President's Youth Exchange Initiative. The overall objective of the project was to strengthen youth leadership resources in both Indiana and the Dominican Republic through a six-week thematic exchange in the area of natural resources and conservation education.

Funding permitted Indiana 4-H to host eight Dominican youths and to send eight 4-H members and one adult Extension agent to the Dominican Republic from June 6 to July 15, 1985. The Dominican Republic was proposed as the exchanging country because of Purdue University's involvement in development projects there. Planning for the exchange was facilitated by the project director meeting with Dominican agricultural extension service officials in Santo Domingo in May, 1985.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Selection of 4-H members was based on an application form developed by the Department of 4-H and Youth and the International Programs in Agriculture faculty at Purdue University (see Appendix A). Three written references were required of each candidate (see Appendix B). A total of 43 youths applied for the exchange. Following an initial screening of applications for eligibility, 16 potential candidates were invited for interviews before a committee comprised of the above-named faculty with additional representation from the Department of

Forestry and Natural Resources at Purdue. Final selection of the eight participants was based on interviews and written recommendations. The eight 4-H members selected included five males and three females between the ages of 15 and 18.

To be eligible, 4-H members were required to be between 15 and 19 years of age at the time of travel. In addition, candidates had to have been enrolled in 4-H natural resources projects for a minimum of two years. Participants were required to possess a level of maturity and flexibility necessary for such an international experience as demonstrated through interviews and written recommendations. Although not required, a degree of fluency in Spanish was preferred. Participants were supplied a language tape for study prior to departure. Of the participants selected, two were quite fluent in Spanish, three had limited fluency and three spoke no Spanish.

Each 4-H member contributed $225 representing 50 percent of the estimated air fare to Santo Domingo. Costs associated with obtaining a passport, physical examination and any insurance coverage beyond that provided by the grant were the responsibility of the 4-H member. In addition, 4-Hers provided spending money to pay for film, gifts and other incidental expenses. Spending money requirements were estimated to be $225 per person. Dominican host families were expected to provide room and board at no cost to the 4-H exchangees.

A Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service agricultural agent in Wells County, Don Kelso, accompanied the 4-H group. Kelso has a strong background in agriculture and natural resources and is skilled at working with youths. His role was to facilitate the group's activities during the exchange and assist with evaluation and followup activities upon their return.

The inbound Dominicans were selected by the Dominican agricultural extension service. The group consisted of six males and two females, all between the ages of 17 and 19. Selection procedures and eligibility requirements were the same for the Dominican youths as for the 4-H members, excepting two variations. It was our desire that the Dominican youths be actively involved in or have strong interests in the area of natural resources as evidenced by membership in Clubes 5-D (the sister organization of 4-H in the Dominican Republic) or other youth organizations. Additionally, some fluency in English was preferred, but not required. Of the participants selected, only two possessed any degree of fluency in English.

The Dominican exchangees had no expenses directly associated with the exchange. They were each provided a $40 travel allowance to cover meals and incidental expenses enroute to and from Indiana. Room and board were provided by the American host families. The Dominicans were expected to bring about $60 spending money to cover incidental expenses. Any costs associated with obtaining a passport and a physical examination was the responsibility of each Dominican.

Host Family Recruitment and Selection

American host families were recruited and selected using an established Indiana 4-H host family application and recommendation procedure. This process provides for evaluative input by Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service field staff familiar with the applicant family. To be eligible, families were required to have children of the same sex and approximate age as their Dominican exchangee.

Host families received appropriate written orientation materials beforehand. Although it would have been desirable, selection of the Dominican youths was not completed in adequate time to permit correspondence between each host families and their respective Dominican exchangees.

Host families in the Dominican Republic were selected by the Dominican extension service. Again, we were somewhat disappointed that selection was not accomplished in a timely fashion. In some cases, it was apparent that Dominican families had been recruited only a day or two prior to arrival of their 4-H exchangee. This did not make prior correspondence with host families possible, nor did it allow host families much time for preparation.

Host families, both American and Dominican, were expected to provide room and board free of charge at a level of quality considered acceptable by the standards of the hosting countries. American host families were instructed to treat the exchangees as they would their own children--i.e., as a host family they should not expect exchangees to pay for items (movie tickets, meals outside the home, etc.) which they generally would provide for their own children. Likewise, we recognized the potentially limited resources of Dominican host families, and made certain that outbound Americans carried sufficient spending money to avoid placing undue burden on their host families.

Orientation and Debriefing Activities

Four-H participants received written orientation materials and language tapes via mail prior to departure. In addition, immediately prior to departure, 4-H members took part in three days of group orientation activities in Indianapolis. A former Peace Corps volunteer to the Dominican Republic conducted the orientation under the direction of Purdue faculty. Upon arrival in the Dominican Republic, the group participated in two days of orientation activities in San Cristobal conducted by the Dominican extension service.

Several weeks after their return to Indiana, the 4-H group came back together for a one-day debriefing at Purdue University to evaluate the program.

The inbound Dominicans participated in a three-day group orientation immediately upon arrival in Indiana prior to beginning their

homestays. All sessions were conducted in Spanish by the Peace Corps volunteer.

Two days prior to returning to the Dominican Republic, the Dominicans came back to Indianapolis for a two-day debriefing designed to evaluate the program.

Thematic Activities

The 4-H group which traveled to the Dominican Republic participated in activities intended to familiarize them with natural resources practices and, to a lessor degree, agriculture in that country. The exchangees spent the first week together as a group, followed by three-week homestays with Dominican families, followed by two additional weeks together. Grant funds provided transportation for a conservation and agricultural tour that took the group to all parts of the country during the final two weeks.

Group activities included a one-day visit to a Purdue University reforestation project at the Instituto Superior de Agricultura in Santiago. During the visit, 4-Hers assisted Purdue Professor Douglas Knudson with tree counts. They also met with the Dominican Secretario de Estado de Agropecuaria in Santo Domingo, the Dominican counterpart to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Group activities also included visits to the Presidential Palace, the National Agriculture School, a farm equipment manufacturing plant, a charcoal production facility, Clubes 5-D activities and a cigar factory.

The socioeconomic levels of the Dominican host families ranged from poor to wealthy. Likewise, host families were located in all parts of the country. As a result, individual activities and experiences of the 4-H members were rich and varied. One 4-H youth lived with a family that produced flowers for the markets in Miami. He assisted in planting, harvesting and bundling flowers for shipment. Another assisted in a family-owned store. One of the group lived in a family comprised of 12 individuals. During his homestay, he helped harvest pineapples and onions. The youngest 4-H participant, a 15-year-old male, lived with a Peace Corps volunteer and assisted the volunteer in his activities which included teaching English in an elementary school. Generally, the three female 4-H members participated in a narrower range of activities because of cultural restrictions imposed on them by their host families.

While in the Dominican Republic, the 4-H group was prepared to present demonstrations outlining current methods and practices in natural resources and conservation to youth and adult groups.

The exchange provided the eight Dominicans with six-week homestays with Indiana farm families. An attempt was made to place exchangees in host families according to the specific interests of the exchangee. One week after the homestays began, the Dominicans came back together to attend the 4-H Natural Resources Leadership Workshop

at the Hoosier 4-H Leadership Center near West Lafayette. This four-day activity is designed to teach leadership skills to youths involved in the 4-H natural resources program. The Dominicans were brought together again midway through their stay for three days of tours and activities at Purdue University designed to acquaint them with natural resources practices, research and technology in Indiana. These activities included interaction with the faculty of the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources at Purdue, and tours of demonstration conservation plots and research laboratories.

The Dominicans also toured the beef, swine, sheep and dairy research farms at Purdue and the Connor Prairie Farm in Indianapolis. All group activities were conducted in Spanish.

Followup Activities

In order to facilitate sharing their exchange experiences with others, and to encourage returned participants to become involved in continuing studies related to the Dominican Republic, all returned 4-H members are actively providing slide presentations for civic, educational, 4-H and similar audiences.

In addition, upon their return, two of the participants represented the U.S. at the Inter-American Ibero Rural Youth Conference in Washington, D.C. Three participants have been appointed to a statewide extension committee charged with developing new international curricular materials for the 4-H program. Another participant will be serving as a Spanish-language interpreter for the upcoming Pan American Games in Indianapolis. The adult staff member, Don Kelso, wrote five newspaper columns for the Bluffton, Indiana News-Banner on topics related to the Dominican Republic and the exchange.

Evaluation and Debriefing

All American participants completed narrative evaluations of the program elements and took part in a one-day debriefing upon their return. Dominican participants were orally debriefed by a U.S. Information Agency program officer prior to leaving Indiana.

The American participants were unanimous in agreeing that they had gained a better understanding of the problems associated with Third World countries--particularly with regard to the political structure, conservation and agricultural production. One participant remarked that, "Prior to this trip, I could never understand why it was so difficult to solve many of the problems faced by developing countries. But now that I've been to one, it's no longer hard to understand. The problems are so complex, so interrelated, so numerous, and so complicated by political and economic conditions, that it's remarkable that many countries are not worse off than they are."

Likewise, the participants noted an increased awareness that the transfer of American technology to such countries is not necessarily an automatic solution to the problems these countries face. One 4-H member noted that "a John Deere tractor on every farm would be great. But what's the farmer do when it (the tractor) breaks down? Replacement parts aren't available and, even if they were, no one knows how to repair large tractors." Several participants pointed out the importance of addressing conservation and agricultural problems by using locally available, low-cost materials--as opposed to more expensive, imported items.

From a broader perspective, the American participants agreed that experiencing another culture, interacting with another language, living in a less affluent environment and, by necessity, making independent decisions on a daily basis contributed to their overall personal growth and development.

In their debriefing, the Dominicans noted experiencing many of the same cultural benefits as a result of their stay in Indiana. In addition, they stated that the thematic activities were of great benefit educationally. However, they were quick to point out the great technological and economic gaps which exist between the United States and developing countries such as the Dominican Republic. As a result, the Dominicans expressed a moderate degree of frustration as they considered how they would use what they had learned while in Indiana upon returning to their own country. One member of the project staff observed that perhaps the new knowledge gained by the Dominicans was not nearly as important as their simply becoming aware that new and better ways of managing natural resources and producing agricultural products are available. Such an awareness could conceivably serve as a motivator and help shape future educational and career decisions facing the Dominicans.

Program Recommendations

The following major recommendations are offered for future exchanges with the Dominican Republic:

1) The Dominican participants and Dominican host families should be selected earlier in order to facilitate better orientation, and to permit all exchangees to correspond with their respective host families by mail prior to the actual exchange. The fact that the 4-H Department did not know the location of the Dominican host families prior to the exchange caused considerable concern for 4-H members' parents.

2) The exchange activities planned by the Dominican extension service need to be more organized, and organized in a more timely manner. In many instances, the 4-H exchangees were not made aware of planned activities until the last minute.

3) A more dependable method needs to be developed by which the youth participants in the Dominican Republic can readily contact the adult American in the event of an emergency. In one instance, a 4-H participant was ill for several days before the 4-H staff member was advised.

4) It would be desirable to have more time between the date that grants are awarded and the actual exchange begins. This would facilitate better orientation and allow more time for host family recruitment in both countries.

5) The quantity and quality of the cultural orientation provided the Dominicans both before and after their arrival in the U.S. needs to be improved.

6) Although language was not a major barrier to either group, it is still desirable to select participants who have a background in the language of the host country whenever possible.

7) Dominican host families who host female 4-H exchangees need additional cultural orientation concerning the role of females in American society in an effort to reduce the cultural restrictions imposed by host families. Perhaps this would permit female American exchangees to participate in a broader range of activities during the exchange.

Michael H. Stitsworth is an assistant professor in the Department of 4-H and Youth at Purdue University where he administers international 4-H youth exchange programs.

INDIANA 4-H/DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
NATURAL RESOURCES EXCHANGE

Application Form

Thank you for your interest in this exchange opportunity! Please carefully complete this application form. All responses should be typed or neatly printed. In addition to completing this application, you must furnish three references using the forms attached. You will want to give one of these forms to three people who know you well--for example, a teacher, family friend, Extension agent or minister. Please ask these three individuals to return their completed forms directly to the State 4-H Office. The address is on the reference forms. When requesting a reference, it is customary to furnish each individual with a pre-addressed, stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT: This application form and all three references must be received in the State 4-H Office no later than April 15 in order to be considered. This deadline is necessary in order to announce selections by April 27. You may want to check with your references to be sure they have submitted your reference forms. Please avoid disappointment by being certain that we receive your materials on time.

Full Name: _____ Name You Wish To Be Called: _____

Home Address: _____ Mailing Address: _____

_____ _____
Town State Zip Town State Zip

Age: _____ Sex: ( ) Male ( ) Female County: _____

Telephone Number: ( )_____ Date of Birth: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ No. Years in 4-H: _____

Place of Residence: ( ) City ( ) Small Town ( ) Rural (non-farm) ( ) Farm

Participation in 4-H Natural Resources Projects/Activities:

Name of Project/Activity	No. Years Participated	List Major Activities, Accomplishments, Responsibilites, Leadership Roles

Circle the highest year you will have completed in school as of June 1, 1985:

High School: 9-Freshman 10-Sophomore 11-Junior 12-Senior

College: Freshman Sophomore Special/Technical Training

Language Ability: (other than English - indicate: excellent, good, fair, poor, none)

Language	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Verbal Comp.	Years of Study

Travel Experience In the U.S.: _____

_____

_____

Travel Experience Outside the U.S.: _____

_____

_____

Family International Activities (include visitors hosted): _____

_____

_____

_____

Why do you wish to participate in this exchange? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If selected for this exchange, how would you propose to share your experience with others upon your return? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Exchange applicants must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for participation (please use this list as a checklist of eligibility):

( ) Be between 15 and 19 years of age on June 1, 1985

( ) Enrolled in one or more 4-H Natural Resources Projects for at least two years

( ) Provide 3 written references on attached forms (provide forms for references to send directly to the State 4-H Office)

( ) If selected as a finalist applicant must be available for an interview in Indianapolis on April 20 (other arrangements will be made in cases of extreme hardship)

( ) Application must be received in State 4-H Office by April 15

( ) Reference forms must be received in State 4-H Office by April 15

( ) If selected, exchangee must agree to present at least six presentations to groups telling about his/her exchange experience

( ) Be willing to share their 4-H knowledge about conservation of natural resources with groups in Dominican Republic

With our signatures, we certify that the statements made in this application are true and accurate to the best of our knowledge. We have read the criteria for eligibility and believe the applicant to be a suitable candidate for this exchange experience.

_____	_____	_____
Applicant	Parent/Guardian	Youth Agent
_____	_____	_____
Date	Date	Date

Please return this form no later than April 15 to:

Michael H. Stitsworth
4-H Department
AGAD Room 228
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907

INDIANA 4-H INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Confidential Reference Form

Name of Applicant: _____ County: _____

The above named 4-H club member is applying to travel to Dominican Republic this summer for six weeks as part of the Indiana 4-H/Dominican Republic Natural Resources Exchange. Each 4-H member will live with a Dominican family. The group will be accompanied by a Purdue University staff member. Your thoughtful evaluation of the applicant's ability to assume this role will be appreciated.

Name of Person Completing This Form: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: (___) _____

_____

1) Based on young people you know, how would you rank the applicant's ability to assume the responsibility of traveling in terms of:

	Poor	Below Average	Good	Above Average	Excellent
A. Maturity					
B. Accepting Responsibility					
C. Trustworthiness					
D. Accepting Authority					
E. Cultural Flexibility					
F. Leadership					
G. Enthusiam and Energy					
H. Self-confidence					

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

==over ==>

2) In terms of other young people you know, how well does this applicant relate to others?

	Poor	Below Average	Good	Above Average	Excellent
A. Adults					
B. Peers					
C. Interpersonal Relationships					
D. In Group Settings					

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

3) Would you recommend the applicant as a participant in the stated travel program? (please check one)

_____ Yes, without reservation

_____ Yes, but with some reservation

_____ Uncertain

_____ Probably not

_____ Definately not

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Signature: _____

Please Return this form to: Michael H. Stitsworth
4-H Department
AGAD Bldg. Room 228
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907

IMPORTANT: Form must be received by April 15 for applicant to remain eligible